

## INTRODUCTION

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to a radical change in life style. The thesis of eclecticism, when tested, fails to materialize.

In summing up my position, then, perhaps I can best express it in the crisp form that was necessary for writing a brief exhortation in the September 2, 1977, issue of *Kethiv Quere*, a student publication at Dallas Theological Seminary. Let me quote that short article here in full:

### The Basis for Christian Counseling

The Christian's basis for *counseling*, and the basis for a *Christian's* counseling is nothing other than the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is his counseling textbook.

"Why?" you ask. "After all, the Christian doesn't use the Bible as his basis for scores of other activities in which he engages—such as engineering, architecture, music—so why should he insist that the Scriptures are the basis for counseling?"

The answer to that question is at once both simple and profound (because of its simplicity don't miss the profundity of its implications). The Bible is the basis for a Christian's counseling because it deals with the same issues that all counseling does.<sup>12</sup> The Bible was given to help men come to saving faith in Christ and then to transform believers into His image (II Tim. 3:15-17). The Holy Spirit uses it as an "adequate" instrument that He says has the "power" to do so. That, in substance, is what these verses say.

But note, too, in these verses God assigns this life calling of transforming lives by the Word to the "man of God" (a phrase Paul picks up from the Old Testament designation for a prophet and uses in the pastoral epistles to refer to the Christian minister).<sup>13</sup> And, let me repeat, the Holy Spirit strongly declares that the Bible fully equips him for this work.

So then, it is because counseling—the process of helping others to love God and their neighbors—is a part of the ministry of the Word (just as preaching is) that it is unthinkable to use any other text (just as it would be unthinkable to do so in preaching). A ministry of the *Word* is not such when it is based on substitutes.

The Bible is the basis for a Christian's counseling because of what counseling is all about (changing lives by changing values, beliefs, relationships, attitudes, behavior). What other source can provide

12. Engineering, music, etc., do not. I have written about this at length elsewhere. See especially *Lectures*.

13. Of course, informally—not as an official calling—all believers are to counsel, just as all are to proclaim the Word.

a standard for such changes? What other source tells us how to make such changes in a way that pleases God?

That is why other foundations for counseling must be rejected. Not only are they *not needed* (the Bible is adequate—the unique One, Who is *the* Counselor proved that by His own counseling ministry), but since they seek to do the same sorts of things (without the Scriptures and the Spirit), they are *also competitive*.

God doesn't bless His competition! Nor does He bless disobedience to His Word by His servants.

As future ministers of the Word, be just that—only that, and nothing else but that—ministers of the *Word!* Do not forsake the Fountain of living water for the cracked cisterns of modern counseling systems.